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ABSTRACT

Under current California law, instructional materials for grades one through eight must be adopted and selected before being printed or purchased and distributed to schools, a procedure known as the adoption cycle. A recent committee report recommended that the adoption cycle be reduced from 26 to 15 months. A review of the process revealed that the cycle could be reduced to 20 months through minor modifications of procedures; however, reduction to a 15-month cycle would require rethinking of present role relationships and statewide policy. Time/activity charts are provided. (EMH)

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Adoption of Instructional Materials

A Report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • Wilson Riles – Superintendent of Public Instruction • Sacramento, 1976

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ED 004 268

A Report on the Adoption of Instructional Materials

On June 16, 1975, in the Supplementary Report of the Committee on Conference Relating to the Budget Bill, it was recommended that:

> the Department of Education submit a report to the Legislature by December 1, 1975, that includes a maximum textbook evaluation cycle of 15 months as calculated from the date of publisher submission to district receipt of materials. This investigation shall include a total review of the textbook ordering, manufacturing, and distribution process.

This report is pursuant to that recommendation. It analyzes the possibilities of reducing the length of the evaluation cycle under various circumstances and in view of present legislation and evaluation procedures.

The California Constitution requires the State Board of Education to adopt textbooks for use in grades one through eight in California. The Legislature has established an advisory body, the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, to assist the State Board in this function. On January 10, 1975, the State Board approved a plan for a new approach to the required adoption. This plan, in its first year of implementation, is being revised; time requirements are being reduced, and procedures are being improved.

Steps in the Adoption Cycle

Under current law instructional materials must be adopted and selected before being printed or purchased and distributed to the schools. The whole procedure is referred to as the adoption cycle:

1. Adoption. The first step in the cycle involves the evaluation and adoption of instructional materials at the state level. The State Board of Education distributes nationwide a call for bids; that is, an invitation to publishers to submit samples of instructional materials as well as sealed bids. Requirements for bidding and criteria for the evaluation of instructional materials are contained in the call for bids. Publishers and producers respond by submitting samples of instructional materials, which are examined for legal compliance by panels made up of a broad cross-section of California citizens. If the materials are approved for legal compliance, they are then evaluated for content and methodology by professional educators: teachers, curriculum experts, and the like. The Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission and the Department of Education use these evaluations as the basis for the preparation of the Instructional Materials Selection Guide, published by the Department and designed to assist school districts in the selection process. The commission then prepares and submits a list of instructional materials recommended for adoption to the State Board, which alone has the power to adopt.

2. Selection. The second step in the adoption cycle involves the selection of instructional materials by school districts. Selection guides and order forms are sent to the districts, which select those instructional materials that best fit district needs. Completed order forms are sent to the Department of Education, where they are tallied so that the volume of orders for each of the adopted materials can be determined; and the tally is sent on to the State Printer.

3. Printing or purchase and distribution. The final step in the adoption cycle involves the printing or purchase and distribution of instructional materials. On the basis of the tally provided by the Department of Education, the State Printer decides which instructional materials are economically feasible for reproduction in the State Printing Plant. After original copy for the instructional materials has been obtained from the publishers, the materials are printed and bound. They are then sent to the textbook warehouse for distribution to school districts. Those instructional materials that the State Printer cannot economically reproduce are purchased directly from publishers or producers, who ship them directly to the school districts.

Reduction in the Adoption Cycle

The Education Code requires the multiple adoption of instructional materials, the participation in the adoption process of the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, and the use of the services of the State Printer when feasible. The process from submission of materials to the State Board to receipt in the schools now takes about 26 months (see Chart 1). An examination of the feasibility of a 20-month cycle or a 15-month cycle is presented as follows:

Twenty-Month Cycle

Without changes in legislative requirements or basic procedures, the present adoption cycle can be reduced to approximately 20 months' duration. The evaluation process now takes up to nine months. The examination of instructional materials for legal compliance and for educational content can be performed concurrently. In addition, an increase in the number of panels should allow the completion of both examinations in four months, including one month for legal compliance appeals. The simplifying of the preparation of the textbook order form and the entering of basic information into the computer system earlier should allow the saving of two months' time. This cycle would, therefore, require about 20 months (see Chart 2).

Fifteen-Month Cycle

Because it provides such a large market for publishers, California attracts a large number of submissions for review. In addition, it is important that the reviews for legal compliance (i.e., no sex stereotyping; adequate cultural, racial, and ethnic balance; and so forth) and educational content be made carefully. Under the requirements of the current instructional materials adoption law, therefore, a 15-month cycle--from the time of submission by the publisher to the time of distribution to school districts--is impossible without serious impairment of the quality of materials selected for adoption.

Reduction from a 20-month cycle to a 15-month cycle would require a reduction in the number of months following adoption since the 20-month cycle would already reduce the evaluation period to an absolute minimum. It would be necessary to reconsider the roles of the State Board of Education, the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, the State Department of Education, and the State Department of General Services (on behalf of the State Printer) in the adoption cycle. In addition, new procedures for allocating and controlling credit, ordering, and contracting with and paying publishers and producers would have to be devised.

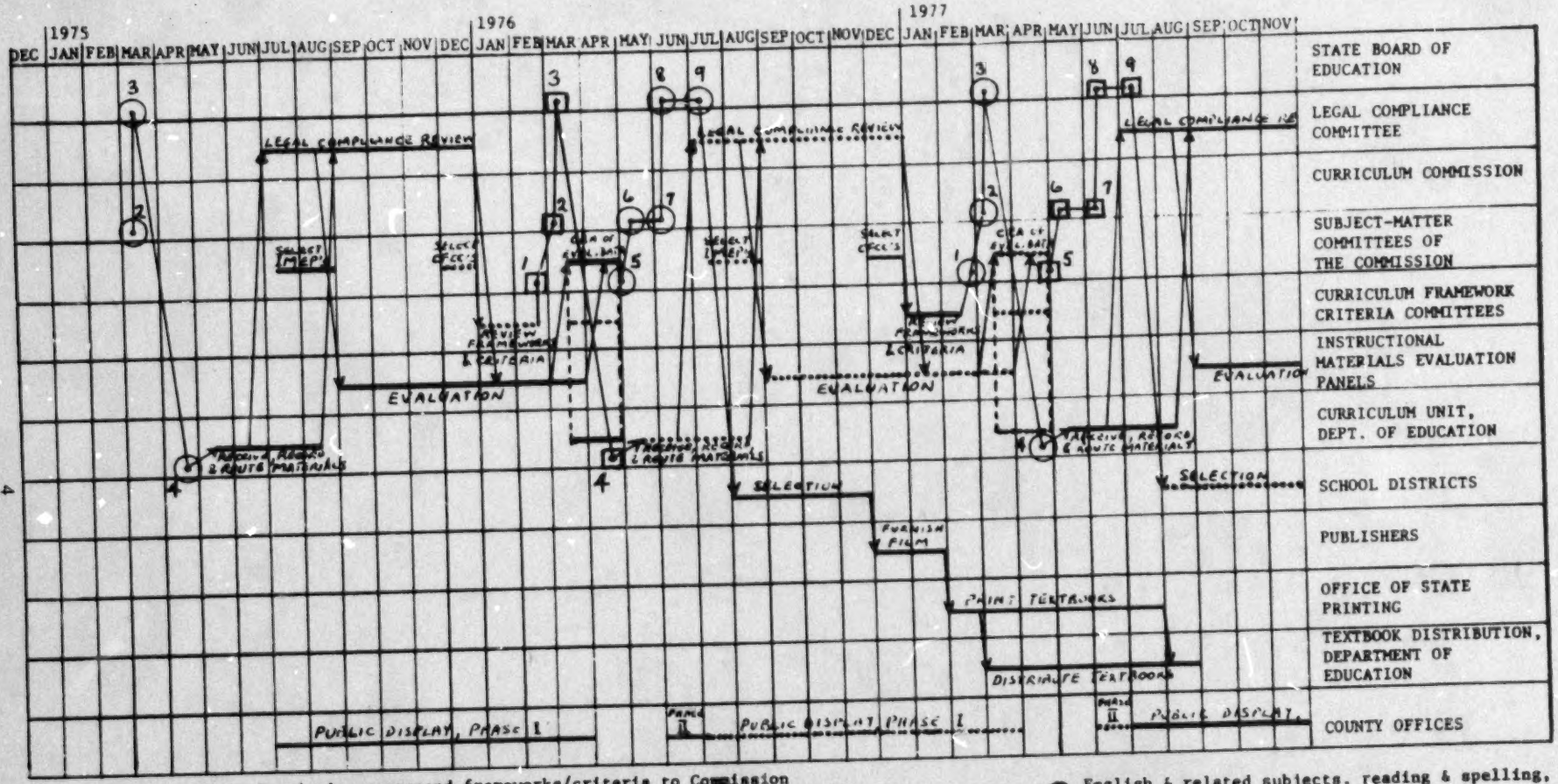
Conclusions of the Study

The current 26-month adoption cycle can be reduced to approximately 20 months by means of changes in adoption procedures only. However, for this reduction to be made, the cycle must begin not on July 1 but on January 1. Although this change could not be made in 1976, it could be accomplished in 1977.

A reduction in time to a 15-month adoption cycle would require considerable rethinking of present role relationships and of statewide policy approaches to the adoption of instructional materials. Like the 20-month cycle, the 15-month cycle would require a transition from a beginning date of July 1; the 15-month cycle would have to begin on May 1.

A further complication might arise in that materials would be acquired in fiscal year 1977-78 pursuant to an adoption made in June, 1977. It would be necessary to arrange the process so that the acquisition of materials adopted in December, 1977, could be paid for in fiscal year 1978-79 but still be delivered by September, 1978. Even if a 15-month cycle were implemented, it is doubtful, given the present law, that instructional materials of better quality would be made available to the schools.

Chart 1 An Adoption Cycle Lasting 26 Months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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
LEGAL COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
CURRICULUM COMMISSION
SUBJECT-MATTER COMMITTEES OF THE COMMISSION
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK CRITERIA COMMITTEES
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS EVALUATION PANELS
CURRICULUM UNIT, DEPT. OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PUBLISHERS
OFFICE OF STATE PRINTING
TEXTBOOK DISTRIBUTION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COUNTY OFFICES
LEGAL COMPLIANCE REVIEW
EVALUATION
SELECTION
PUBLIC DISPLAY, PHASE I
PUBLIC DISPLAY, PHASE II

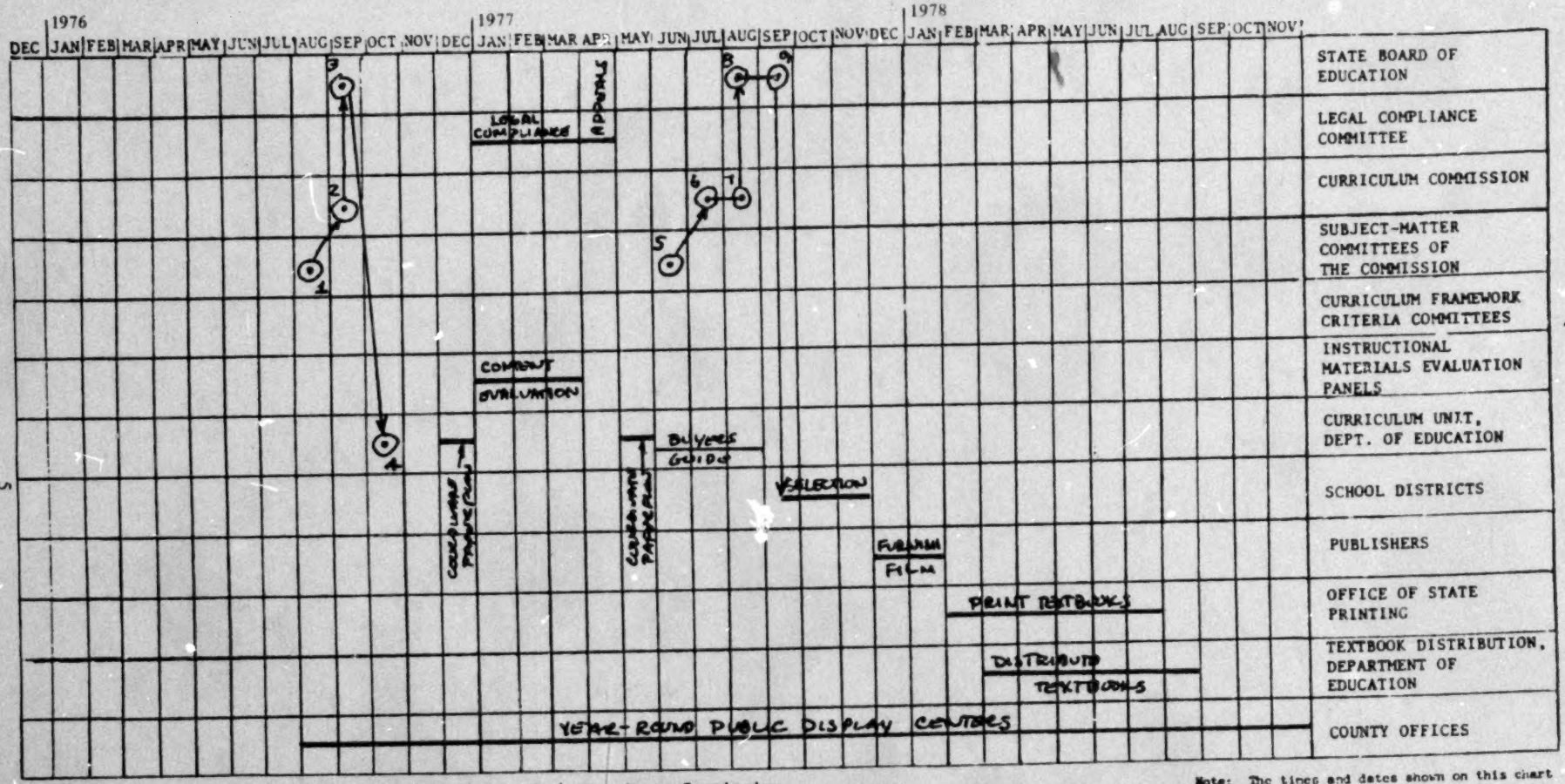
1. Committees of the Commission recommend frameworks/criteria to Commission
2. Commission recommends frameworks/criteria to State Board
3. State Board adopts frameworks/criteria
4. Call for bids
5. Committees of the Commission recommend adoption list to Commission
6. Commission makes choices for recommendation
7. Commission reports recommendations to State Board
8. Public hearing
9. Final adoption by State Board

——— ⊙ English & related subjects, reading & spelling, foreign languages, bilingual-bicultural

..... ⊡ science, health, fine arts (music), mathematics, social sciences

Note: The times and dates shown on this chart are not to be considered precise or inflexible; they are based on estimates and assumptions which are subject to possible error and change. The chart represents one possible schedule for one three-year period.

Chart 2 An Adoption Cycle Lasting 20 Months



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